Nixon Tours Tornado-Stricke

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From News Dispatches

XENIA, Ohio, April 9—President Nixon today toured this shattered Southern Ohio city, calling the destruction the worst he had ever seen. He promised to trim red tape and put where a tornado killed 35 persons last week, the full weight of the government into an effort to rebuild the city and aid victims.

The President walked among the ruins of houses, through a muddy field adjacent to a destroyed junior high school, and visited the National Guard headquarters here.

"The spirit of this city is great," Mr. Nixon told tornado victims lined up in a school gymnasium applying for aid. "It will come back. This is the worst devastation I've seen in a small area and I've seen the earthquake in Anchorage, the devastation of Hurricane Camille and Hurricane Agnes in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Nixon flew here from Washington via Wright-Patterson AFB in nearby Dayton, this morning and returned to Washington shortly after 2 p.m.

He is scheduled Wednesday to make a nine-community campaign motorcade through a rural, conservative Republican area of Michigan. Vice President Gerald Ford campaigned for two incumbent congressmen in the Detroit area today.

The President will visit Michigan on the invitation of James Sparling, who is facing a strong challenge in a special election April 16 from J. Robert Traxler, a Democratic state representative who says "Nixon is the only issue in the campaign."

While several Republican candidates across the country have said they don't want the President to visit their districts, Sparling issued the invitation. But he said it was not a call for Mr. Nixon to campaign on his behalf,

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The President said he flew to Xenia to assure people that every step possible is being taken by the federal government to ensure people get housing, food and schooling.

The President, a sports fan, clenched his fists tightly in front of him as he told tornado victim Dawn M. Hurst, 41, of nearby Wilberforce:

"You will make it. You will make it as well as Henry Aaron who hit that home run last night. Wasn't that something? The stage was all set and he just about picked the inning and then he hit it over the fence."

Baseball star Aaron, of the Atlanta Braves, broke the legendary Babe Ruth's most famous record with his 715th regular-season career home run on Monday night.

Mr. Nixon also saw clocks that had stopped at 4:40 p.m., the time the tornado hit Xenia. The tornado wiped out house after house, turning them into little more than piles of dust, and badly damaged the business district.

During the trip, James T. Lynn, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, said that the emphasis was on getting food stamps, housing, schooling and unemployment relief to the Tornado victims.

Mr. Nixon has also declared Kentucky, Indiana, Alabama and Tennessee disaster areas.

The President told Lynn to take personal responsibility for taking care of the town's housing needs.

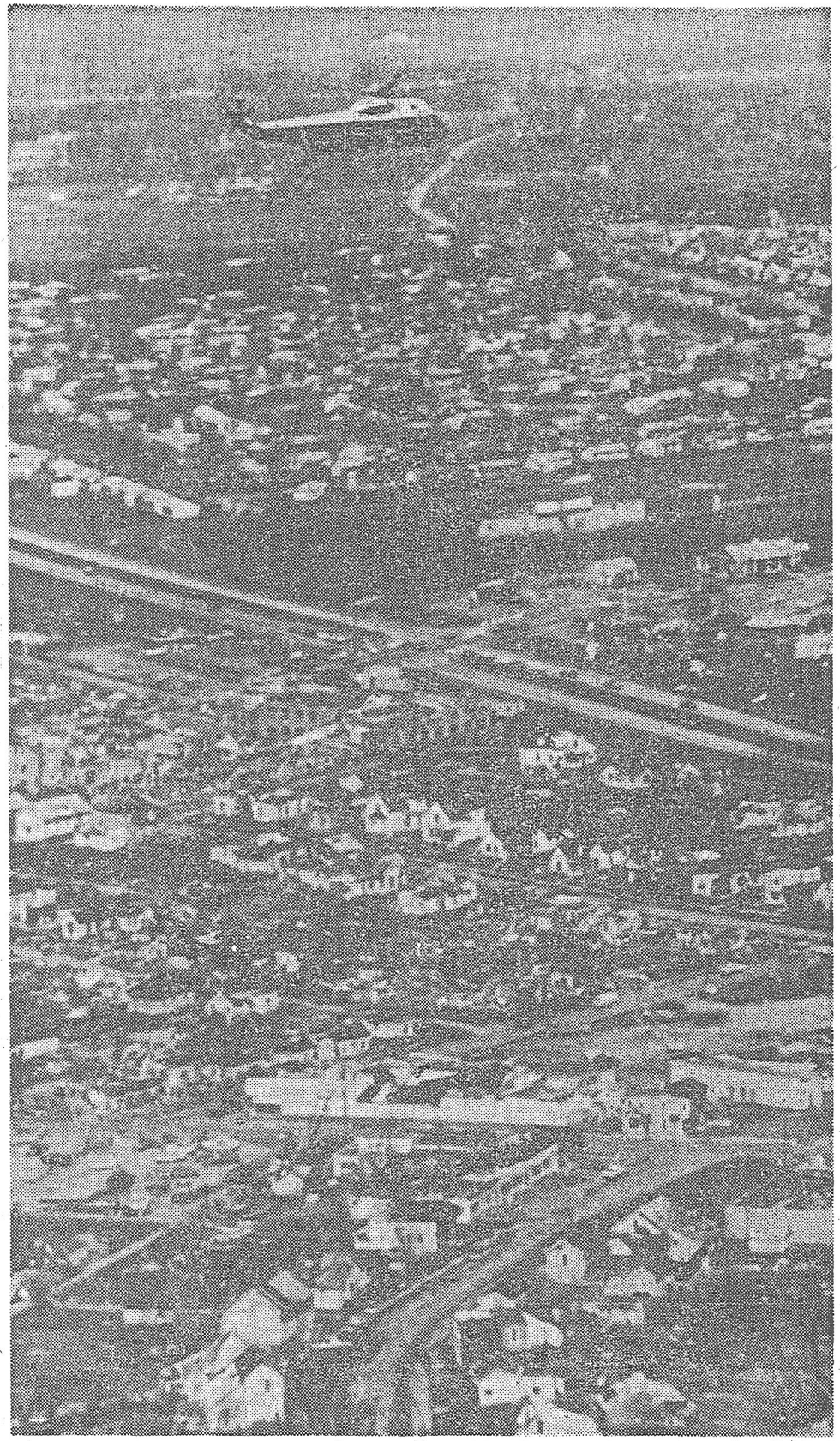
As he toured schools and houses, Mr. Nixon was greeted by cries of "thank you for coming."

In Washington, the Associated Press reported that Robert F. Ellsworth, a former Kansas congressman and senior campaign worker for President Nixon in 1968, will be nominated to fill a key Pentagon post vacant for more than three months.

The choice illustrates how the threat of impeachment is apparently affecting important Nixon administration decisions.

Ellsworth, wealthy president of a New York-based investment company, will be nominated in about 10 days as assistant secretary for international security affairs, Pentagon and Congressional sources said. The agency, known as the "Little State Department," serves as the policy-making arm of the Defense Department in dealings with the State Department and thus with governments overseas. Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger is known to favor upgrading the importance of ISA.

A congressional source indicated Ellsworth was chosen specifically to satisfy Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), who successfully opposed—almost singlehandedly — the nomination of Paul H. Nitze, currently an arms controls specialists in the Pentagon.



Associated Press

President Nixon's helicopter flies over Xenia, Ohio, as he checks tornado damage.